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York, organized by her efforts, for civic reform in the anti-Tammany campaigns of 1894 and 1897. She was actively interested in the movement for international peace, to which she gave herself especially at the time of the International Peace Congress in 1904, and in the cause of the Filipinos.

Her pioneer work in behalf of playgrounds and recreation piers began at least as far back as 1890. Even more modern is her interest in labor questions which led her in 1889 to withdraw from the State Board of Charities in order to give her time to this set of problems. Her pronouncements on prison labor, on strikes and conciliation, on "workingmen's rights in property created by them," and on the living wage, are interesting, sometimes surprisingly radical. An active friend of the Working Women's Society (organized 1886), she was first president of the Consumer's League (1891-96), and influential in securing such reforms as the appointment of women factory inspectors.

It is well that Mr. Stewart's volume contains so much of Mrs. Lowell's own direct and effective presentation of her views. The unanalyzable sense of personality which is the salt of all biography nobly savors this whole book.

EMILY GREENE BALCH.

Wellesley College.

Social Conditions in Provincial Towns. First Series: Portsmouth; Worcester, Cambridge, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Oxford, Leeds.
Edited by MRS. BERNARD BOSANQUET. (London: Macmillan and Company. 1912. Pp. 82. 1s.)

In this little booklet several writers, each considering only one community, undertake to draw a brief verbal sketch of the social, economic, and sanitary conditions that prevail. For conciseness and graphic description of the housing problems, the problems of unemployment, morality, poverty, and vice, the work leaves little to be desired. From the point of view of the interest that the ordinary citizen may manifest in his own community these sketches may serve to rejuvenate some of the efforts, either local or national, towards solving the serious difficulties that are represented. The student of facts, however, will find that much that is said in the articles is based upon personal observation and opinion which cannot be verified by figures and other evidence which is usually presented in sociological studies of communities. The American

reader will find in this pamphlet description of conditions which might be duplicated in almost any city of the same size, and with similar industrial opportunities, in the United States. Each of the communities considered is typical of its kind and each presents social problems which are the result of its industrial development and its history.

CAROL ARONOVICI.

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Grants in Aid: A Criticism and a Proposal. By SIDNEY WEBB. (London, New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1911. Pp. 129. 5s.)

The text fills 110 pages; a bibliography fills 19; the latter is chiefly of information bearing on grants for particular purposes, as finance and governments. This book seems to be, says Mr. Webb, the first one to appear as a treatise on grants in aid. The first sentence is that "The Grant in Aid," a device peculiar to English administration, has hitherto failed to receive the consideration that its practical importance deserves," and soon follows (page 3) the interesting statement that "if we seek to estimate the real as distinguished from the nominal constitution of the United Kingdom of the present day . . . we may come to the unexpected conclusion that the Grant in Aid, mere financial adjustment though it seems to be, is more and more becoming the pivot on which the machine really works." Mr. Webb's argument is plain. From the civil war of the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, nearly all public administration was in local hands, and the central government left them alone: there was "an anarchy of local autonomy." Then, without theory and almost unnoticed, there grew up a way of securing national supervision and control, required in the interest of the community as a whole, without offending local autonomy and without losing the value of local initiative. By grants in aid, from the national exchequer, to one local governing body after another, for particular purposes, the national government bought rights of great import, for the general welfare. In 1830, the total annual payments of such nature, mostly odds and ends of historical survivals, were probably less than a hundred thousand pounds; now, the total for the United Kingdom is probably near thirty millions; and vast increases are likely.